

The guidance counselor's input on the role of unions in industrial relations

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Abstract

The emphasis will be on the unions' function in the nation's management of labor relations. In connection to guidance counselors in the workplace, this function may be evaluated in terms of contributions to member welfare, industrial peace, democratic processes in industrial relations, productivity, and economic and social advancement. Let's just say that each of them is crucial to positive labor relations. It is that the Southern Nigeria Civil Service

Union was the nation's first trade union, having been established in 1912. However, there were about 1,000 trade unions spread out throughout the nation and registered with the Registrar of Trade Unions by 1976, when the nation's trade union movement was undergoing restructuring. Between 1940 and 1976, the overall membership increased from 274,126 to around 900,000 (Sonubi, 1986).

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, trade unions began as voluntary associations of laborers seeking to better their members' pay and working conditions. By 1938, the government had either convinced itself or been convinced to pass legislation governing the establishment and operations of labor unions. There was a tacit acknowledgment of the function of trade unions [the lives of their members and the society] in opposition to the British Common law, which interfered with their operations (Joseph, Mire, 1956; Sonubi, 1987). Given the increase in living expenses after World War I, trade unions successfully advocated for wage increases in 1938, demonstrating their concern in the pay and working conditions of its members. The workers were given a cost-of-living stipend as a result of the same pressure that persisted during and after World War II. But up until recently, the trade unions were too weak and fragmented to significantly improve the

lives of their members. By 1978, trade unions had evolved into employers' and workers' organizations with the goal of defending their members' interests. The independent contractors were neglected. The following changes were made to the voluntary concept that underpins membership. First of all, the policy's goal is for every employee to be a member of a trade union, however they are free to choose not to. Second, workers are allowed to join the unions that are relevant to their industry or line of work. Thirdly, affiliation with a single, designated central labor organization is required of the 42 national trade unions representing junior employees. Fourth, workers who were identified as management projections were prohibited from joining the same union as their subordinates. Therefore, the freedom to join or not is governed by the legislation of the state, even though no employee is required to join or stay in a trade union.

Lastly, employers and workers are not allowed to join the same union. The following terms were used to describe the advantages in greater detail: —Better conditions of service housing allowance, transportation allowance, leave allowance, and gratuity benefits are just a few of the benefits that the union was able to secure for its members across the nation. Others mentioned improved leadership, member education, uniform policies across the nation, positive management responses, increased union independence, borrowing from others, employer recognition, implementation of the Onosode Commission report, speaking with one voice, building its own secretariat, termination of subcontracts (which were taking away some members' jobs), elimination of the daily paid system, financial buoyancy for the unions, 1710 bags of rice; 1018 cartons of milk; 302 cartons of sugar; 500 cartons of sardine;

204 cartons of corned beef;

81 bags of stock fish; and many other commodities.

INDUSTRIAL PEACE

The years 1977, 1979, 1980, 1981, and 1982 were among the worst in recent memory for industrial warfare, according to data on trade disputes and strikes. At a recent Industrial Forum, Mr. M. A. Tokunboh, a former Permanent Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Labor and General Secretary of the Nigeria Trade Union Congress, made the following statement in clear reference to this development: —The need for an open discussion of the role of unions in the life of this great country has become necessary because of the serious hardships that trade union action, by way of industrial unrest, have been inflicting in the past eighteen years" (Cook, 1958).

Although trade unions are not exempt from accountability for instances of strikes and work stoppages, it is a well-known truth that many trade unions' covert requests for communication and accommodations from employers are often met with resistance. For example, although it is true that certain trade unions sometimes use vacillation to call for

construction of housing for workers by hiring and allocating to ten members' families, among other things. The new trade union's structure was blamed for the advantages to its members, which would manifest both individually and collectively. In reality, 48.9% of respondents said that their trade unions were taking part in socioeconomic initiatives with member support (Ghosh, 1957 in Sonubi 1987). Regardless of the financial stability of their companies, the bosses may not have made any concessions to their employees in the absence of pressure from the trade unions. In addition, the labor unions practiced self-help. For example, as of April 1984, the NLC-backed Multi-purpose Consumer Co-operative Society reportedly provided the following items:

strikes and work stoppages, it is inaccurate to place the blame on the trade unions in this situation.

Democratic Processes

The nature of trade unions affects their function. As a result, they mostly recruit new members voluntarily. They act as the workers' representative, participate in collective bargaining and annulations, handle trade disputes, and look for and take part in decision-making on issues that affect them. One of the most important aspects of industrial relations, according to the London —Economist" (11 January 1975), is the right of working people to be informed about, consulted about, and, yes, help decide about their working lives and that of the company they work for—whose success or failure typically matters far more to them than it does to any but, the most imprudent investor, who has all his eggs in one basket. However, far too many businesses are avoiding or disregarding the pressure, even as labor unions continue to push for democratic procedures. In a similar vein, despite trade unions' calls for companies to adopt democratic procedures, far too many

of them refuse to do so. The Adebisi Tribunal's report makes it abundantly evident that some trade unions allowed a small number of people to take control of their internal affairs, which resulted in a situation where the interests of the country and its members were sacrificed for the interests of a few privileged groups within the unions. Correction is required in this case (Otobo, 1983). Even if our trade unions are biased, it is now evident that their contributions to democratic processes are crucial. If a trade union does not follow democratic procedures internally, it will no longer have the moral right to demand democratic procedures from the government or employers. Conversely, a trade union that supports democratic procedures for both its members and the opposing industry is likely to make a substantial contribution to positive working relationships. This is because negotiated settlements, as opposed to forced ones, are more likely to lead to positive labor relations.

PRODUCTIVITY

A program of economic plenty or increasing productivity is more likely to result in good industrial relations. This is the case since such a policy is essential to the organization's life, management survival, and workers' improved standard of living. In truth, everyone's dedication to boosting productivity may assist to revive the economy and give momentum for growth and performance in a challenging economic circumstance like Nigeria's current one. What part the trade unions have played in this issue is an important topic.

In essence, a lot of trade unions mistakenly think that management is to blame for low productivity. Trade unions in Nigeria are no different. However, trade union policies and activities have an impact on productivity, either positively or negatively, either directly or indirectly. For example, by engaging in restrictive practices, failing to maintain harmony throughout an agreement, demanding and receiving wage increases

unrelated to productivity, defending corruption, prioritizing union security over the survival of management and their businesses, opposing innovation and change, and the like,

It is argued that trade unions are obstacles to raising productivity. However, these traditions are mostly seen in nations with robust and long-standing trade unions. In developing nations, where employers are generally powerful and unions are relatively weak, this is seldom the case. For example, trade unions and union members have been disproportionately affected since the start of the present economic downturn. Because of the unions' and their members' real-world experience, they are aware that they have a greater chance when productivity is rising and the economy is doing well. As a consequence, employers and trade unions have often collaborated to ensure the survival of their businesses. More significantly, though, our trade unions, like many others, sometimes take activities that could seem to or actually hinder production, they also contribute to enhanced productivity in other ways. First, our trade unions have contributed to maintaining positive industry morale, which is a prerequisite for positive industrial relations, by demanding humane working conditions, pressuring employers to become more efficient, and upholding collective bargaining agreements. Second, by encouraging structured industrial change, which is less unpleasant and hence more palatable. Thirdly, trade unions contribute to ensuring that workers are not seen as disposable commodities in industry by shielding them from physical and other risks. There is a wealth of evidence regarding their contributions both before to and during the current economic challenges. Due to the unpredictable availability of certain inputs, like electricity and water, the scarcity of some raw materials, and the recent decline in living standards, the flow of products and services now heavily depends on the

ingenuity of those who work there (Sonubi, 1992). Therefore, even if each union has different policies and methods, it is evident that trade unions have a variety of effects on productivity. It must also be acknowledged that by adopting a direct and indirect interest in this issue, trade unions may do much more to promote productivity growth. In this regard, a realistic evaluation of everyone's advantages should serve as the foundation for talks. In a similar vein, trade unions must have a long-term perspective rather than a short-term one. Additionally, they must prohibit actions that reduce productivity.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

In their operations, many trade unions typically concentrate on the industrial front. Trade unions in Nigeria are no different. If it doesn't, it can lose its identity and foundation of resources. However, depending on the level of awareness among their members, trade unions are becoming more and more active in general societal concerns. This is especially true in Nigeria, where labor unions played a highly praised role in the fight for independence. The understanding that social concerns transcend industry borders is the basis for the trade union's participation in broad social issues. As a result, trade unions in Nigeria and other countries want to participate in the formulation and execution of social and economic policies at both the federal and state levels. The National Labor Advisory Council, which represents labor and has contributed to the development of our labor laws, is one of the organizations that exemplifies the participatory approach in industrial relations. Additionally, labor unions have used a variety of additional strategies to influence national policies, such as their stance on several recent Federal Military Government directives. Once more, it is evident that although the primary purpose of trade unions is to empower workers, trade unions and their members have been learning to address labor issues and show interest in broader social issues,

such as international relations, human rights, or the current social order, based on their collective strength and wisdom. For a variety of reasons, trade unions are in reality being forced to serve the community as a whole. One of them is that the government cannot continue the development process on its own. Furthermore, it is becoming more widely acknowledged that social justice may be attained by improved resource management and efficient collaboration, and that development must be negotiated.

Other functions of Trade Union

- 1) It provides a framework to co-ordinate the activities of trade unions in Nigeria
- 2) It consults with governments on matters affecting industrial relations – wage agreements, etc.
- 3) It represents collectively the trade union movement with regard to industrial relations and legislative and administration matters.
- 4) On the request of affiliated unions, it may negotiate at national level with employers' organisations on policy and principles relating to pay and conditions of employment.
- 5) It promotes unity within the trade union movement as a whole.
- 6) It aims to reconcile views and relationships of unions that have similar unions to help strengthen their structures.
- 7) It provides affiliated trade unions with advice and information like legal advice and educational information and facilities.

GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS INPUT

The guidance counselor is qualified to support career and life decisions, educational decisions, personal decisions, and life assessments. The counselor will use a theoretical framework to comprehend individual career development, be familiar with the main theories of vocational

assistance, and comprehend the theoretical underpinnings of career development practice. He works with the labor union to accomplish this. Additionally, the guidance counselor can explain change and transition in the context of lifespan care development, assist people in managing and adjusting to change and transition, and assist people in realizing that change and transition are normal aspects of life (OECD, Paris, 2004). The guidance counselor may explain work/life balance in terms of lifelong career development, such as the need of balancing the many responsibilities that people take on during their professional growth. Put into reality the idea that earning a livelihood is only one aspect of who you are. Recognize the interdependence of people's values and their surroundings; develop career management strategies by assisting people in gaining the skills necessary to manage their careers; recognize that career management is a lifelong process; recognize the significant influence of societal trends on career management; and encourage people's independence and self-confidence. Increasing people's knowledge of possibilities and alternatives, comprehending and agreeing on potential consequences, and figuring out the necessary procedures to make and carry out a decision in order to help people reach their objectives (OECD, Paris, 2004).

By helping clients choose resources and services that suit their needs, developing research skills, helping people access services outside the counselor's area of expertise, and facilitating case management, the guidance counselor can direct people to the right sources. In order to do a need assessment, a guidance counselor may help people define their professional development requirements holistically within the context of their life, ascertain whether those needs fall within the counselor's area of expertise, and, if not, make an appropriate recommendation. Additionally, he can help people identify their work-related interests, skills,

knowledge, and values; help the counselor and the individual negotiate and contract the service to be provided; and help people become self-assured, self-reliant, resilient, enterprising, and ready to meet the demands of knowledge-based economies and fluid societal change (OECD, Paris, 2004). When working with young people, the guidance counselor can help teachers and tutors improve their formal and informal approaches to using guidance resources in a school or adult setting, consult and work with parents regarding their children's educational progress and development, and assist teaching colleagues in incorporating appropriate guidance program elements into the curriculum (OECD, Paris, 2004). When working with adult clients, the guidance counselor can help them engage successfully thru appropriate education and training, support long-term planning and personal portfolio guidance, offer continuity of support across modules and tutors/trainers, and assist adult education colleagues in implementing appropriate aspects of guidance within the adult education program. The guidance counselor provides social and personal counseling. This calls for the ability to help clients become more self-aware of their own values, attitudes, and beliefs as well as those of others; to help clients find and expand coping mechanisms; to help clients understand the significance of emotional expression and develop appropriate ways to express feelings in various contexts; to help clients develop their communication skills; to help clients understand the importance of positive thinking and develop the ability to use this life skill effectively; to help clients understand the impact of stress on emotional and social health and to help them develop personal skills for managing stress. The guidance counselor determines whether it is suitable to perform an assessment, which test instrument to employ, and how to evaluate the findings of an assessment and explain them to a client (OECD, Paris, 2004).

Regarding education and training for the labor market, the guidance counselor will be informed of the many educational training options. The guidance counselor will be knowledgeable about the labor market's workings, current trends, and probable future course. The guidance counselor will keep current labor market data. The guidance counselor will be able to assist people with their job search and labor market preparation, including interview, CV, and application letter preparation. The guidance counselor will be familiar with employment and organizational systems. Guidance counselors are sensitive in their job and acknowledge, comprehend, and value variety. Counselors should be especially mindful of the language they use while speaking with clients and steer clear of out-of-date terminology or phrases that might offend or stereotype people (OECD, Paris, 2004).

A guidance counselor may use time management and planning skills to keep client records up to date. Additionally, he is capable of establishing and sustaining cooperative work relationships, evaluating the services provided, adhering to the proper processes and rules within their job, and communicating with the necessary organizations. When it comes to information and resource management, guidance counselors understand the need of methodical, effective, and efficient information and resource management in their work and are aware of the laws pertaining to data privacy, freedom of information, and other topics. In order to provide customers the greatest variety of possibilities, he must also make sure that up-to-date information is collected, arranged, and distributed (OECD, Paris, 2004).

Counselling Skills

A key component of a guidance counselor's job is counseling. A counselor and client engage in an interactive process called

guidance and counseling, which may entail working one-on-one or in a group. Empathy, sincerity, and unconditional positive regard are abilities that help clients find solutions, make choices, and overcome challenges. Active listening, clarification, paraphrasing, setting boundaries, contracting, challenging, focusing, motivating, using nonverbal communications, probing, questioning, reflecting feelings, prioritizing issues, organizing and summarizing a session, and reviewing progress are additional examples of these skills. Facilitating and helping clients with emotional, social, cultural, relationship, and developmental issues, developing self-management skills, managing transitions and crises, fostering and growing personal awareness, working with feelings, perceptions, and internal and external conflict, as well as economic and labor market issues, are all possible aspects of guidance and counseling.

CONCLUSION

One conclusion that can be made from our discussion so far is that trade unions are essential to the advancement of the community as well as the management of industrial relations. A second conclusion that can be made is that the role of trade unions in relation to collective bargaining, various services to their members, such as education and information, and participation in social and economic decision-making can have a positive or negative impact on industrial relations. This role has many dimensions, some of which were covered in this paper. On the overall, nonetheless, the impacts in Nigeria have been positive rather than negative. Some of the previously described components of positive labor relations are likely to disappear from the nation if unions are not involved in many aspects of labor relations decision-making. Thirdly, trade unions provide an extra benefit of an organized strategy based on collective power and intelligence, even tho individuals participate in industrial relations

with or without their assistance. The labor union has some influence over its members, and this influence may be put to good use. Fourth, how to promote creativity, adaptability, professionalism, a long-term rather than a short-term perspective on their job and interests, and increased efficacy in implementing union policies and programs has been a crucial challenge in the unions' role. Union-member, union-employer, and union-government interactions all depend on these concerns being resolved. One might conclude that there is cause for cautious pleasure rather than hopelessness when considering the role of our trade unions in industrial relations in recent years. They have emerged in a little amount of time. They have learned a great deal in a short amount of time, and if the past is any indication of the future, they will probably succeed in the near future. Nonetheless, the idea that trade unions are assets rather than liabilities in the administration of labor relations might benefit them.

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